

June 20, 1929

GREAT OLD MAN GOES TO REWARD

GILES RATHBUN, SR., EXPIRES AFTER BEING ILL FOR PAST TWO YEARS

Giles Rathbun, Sr., of this city, a venerable old gentleman, who has made Groton his home since 1883, died Monday morning at 5:30, after having been ill for the past two years, and confined to his room since December of last year. Mr. Rathbun would have been 90 years of age in August of this year.

The deceased was one of the early pioneers of Groton. He was born in Norway, New York, Augst 13, 1839. In 1841 he moved with his parents to Milwaukee, at that time a struggling settlement on the far-flung reaches of our western boundary. When Mr. Rathbun first settled in Milwaukee, there were only five business houses there and he lived here until 1855, when he and his parents moved to Sparta, Wis., at which place he was married to Miss Amanda M. Riggs in 1857. Five children were born to this union, Mrs. Charlotte Schwab, of Linton, N. D., Virgil F. Rathbun, Mayor of Groton, Ella J. Troy and Elizabeth Bond, both of whom preceded their father in death, and Mrs. Etta Aves, with whom he has made his home since the death of his wife in 1918, upon whom he was a devoted and faithful attendant during the eleven years of her illness.

In April, 1883, he felt the urge of the pioneer and came to Groton. When he first settled here he started a dray line and in partnership with his son continued this business for a period of twenty years or more. He later sold this business and opened a feed concern. He conducted this for perhaps ten years and disposed of it to G. Madison, in 1907. Mr. Rathbun then retired from active business and settled down to enjoy the fruits of his labors. Since 1907 he has been inactive in business, but he always took a very keen interest in the affairs of Groton, particularly in a sports way. He was baseball's most faithful fan. Even up to the time of his death his love for the game never faltered. Mr. Rathbun waited with great concern the outcome of Sunday's game played here, and when he was told that his grandson had knocked a home run, the joy of the sick man knew no bounds. A home run was his crowning thrill. For twenty years he gave every Groton player a dollar who brought this joy to his heart. Likewise basketball claimed his attention during the winter months. Mr. Rathbun was also a great lover of children. When he was able to move about, every urchin in town knew him as a friend.

Besides the children and grandchildren, Mr. Rathbun is survived by one brother, Byron, of Stevensville, Mont.

The funeral was held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the house and at 2:30 from the Methodist church, of which he was a life-long member, his father being a Methodist preacher. The rites were conducted by Rev. Norris, and the remains laid to rest in Groton cemetery.